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SOVIETS DOUBLE NUKES TARGETED TO HIT U.S.

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WASHINGTON — The Soviet Union has nearly doubled the number of missiles pointed at the U.S. since the SALT II treaty in 1979, according to a grim analysis by U.S. intelligence agencies.

Senior Defense Department and Congressional officials told *The Post* that a National Intelligence Estimate prepared by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency showed that the Soviet nuclear arsenal aimed at the U.S. has increased by an astonishing 80-85 per cent since the SALT accord.

This is far greater than the increase of the U.S. nuclear weapons targeted at the Soviet Union over the same time period.

Officials said that the analysis has sent shockwaves throughout the White House and the National Security Council and poses a major dilemma for President Reagan who is anxiously seeking to avoid confrontations with the Kremlin

during this election year.

In a recent appearance in Congress, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle admitted that the size of the Kremlin nuclear force has grown by more than 75 percent.

But officials who have seen the CIA/DIA estimate, completed this month, say that the still secret figures are more staggering than what Perle revealed.

According to these sources, the Soviets:

- Increased their total number of nuclear warheads pointed at the U.S. from about 5000 in 1979 to 9400.

- Increased the total number of missile launchers to nearly 2500 which officials say violates a SALT limit of 2225.

These figures include all submarine-launched and intercontinental ballistic missiles. They do not include nuclear warheads from strategic bombers — an area where the U.S. is known to have an overwhelming edge.

Despite the Reagan administration's massive defense buildup over the past three years, the number of U.S. nuclear warheads now aimed at the Soviet Union is about 9000.

At the same time, the total number of U.S. missile launchers will decrease from 1850 to about 1800 next year to comply with the SALT treaty, officials say.

The intelligence estimate comes on the heels of the recent completion of a 275-page report of the Arms Control Disarmament Agency which details more than 40 Soviet violations of the SALT accords.

Although Reagan has said publicly in the past four months that he believes the Soviets are violating the SALT accords, officials believe that if Reagan were to challenge the Soviet Union and make a major issue out of these violations it would result in a new outbreak of tensions with the new Kremlin leadership.